

Kirchner Wins Big in Argentina, Boosts Battle for New Bretton Woods

by Dennis Small

The snarling bully tactics of the international financial oligarchy and their Cheney gang enforcers in Washington backfired in Argentina on Oct. 23, when President Néstor Kirchner's political movement, the Victory Front, won a resounding electoral victory in the mid-term Congressional elections. With the Cheney machine crumbling in Washington, and its grip on Ibero-American nations weakening accordingly, the Kirchner victory could help prompt other nations in the region to stand and fight for their sovereignty and development, as Argentina has.

Kirchner's movement received a solid 40% plurality of the votes cast, in elections for half of the 257-member Chamber of Deputies and one-third of the 72-member Senate. The *Kirchneristas* now control the largest voting bloc, if not an absolute majority, in both legislative houses. In the critical senatorial race in Buenos Aires province, where 37% of the national population lives, First Lady Cristina Fernández de Kirchner overwhelmingly defeated Hilda "Chiche" Duhalde, wife of former President Eduardo Duhalde, by 46% to 20%. As a result of the overall outcome, Néstor Kirchner is now the clear front-runner for the 2007 presidential elections.

Kirchner had been elected President in 2003 with a slim 22% plurality of the national vote, so his 40% on Oct. 23 represents a doubling of his base of support.

The elections were widely touted—by friend and foe alike—as a referendum on Kirchner's aggressively nationalist economic policies. Kirchner visited some 50 cities and towns across the country in the two months leading up to the elections, and on a number of occasions he ran into organizers of the LaRouche Youth Movement in Argentina, who handed him documents written by American economist Lyndon LaRouche, and urged him to join the growing international chorus calling for a New Bretton Woods to replace the bankrupt International Monetary Fund (IMF) system.

In 2004, the Kirchner government faced down the IMF and the speculative vulture funds, by forcing them to accept a 65% write-down of the face value of the Argentine public bonds that the country had defaulted on, back in 2001. Kirchner argued, rightly, that the country had already paid its debt many times over, and had been looted by decades of IMF-dictated austerity policies. The debt will not be paid by starving the Argentine people, as has so often happened in the past, Kirchner repeatedly asserted.

On Sept. 14, 2005, Kirchner escalated. That day, Argentine Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa delivered a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, in which he supported those who are "promoting a new call for an international conference of heads of state, similar to the 1944 Bretton Woods conference, to rebuild a more just global monetary and financial architecture which eliminates financial bubbles and concentrates on supporting the real economy." Such a New Bretton Woods conference is most closely associated with the ideas of Lyndon LaRouche.

The victory of the *Kirchneristas* came despite a massive, well-financed campaign of threats and intimidation, coming from both left-wing and right-wing opponents inside Argentina and abroad, who denounced Kirchner as "authoritarian," "dictatorial," "undemocratic," and a "demagogue." Exemplary was the de facto death threat issued by the Kissingerian geopolitician and Bush-Cheney supporter, Mariano Grondona, in his Oct. 16 column in *La Nación*. Kirchner is like Julius Caesar, Grondona wrote, who, "possessed by an unlimited ambition which would only be stopped by Brutus's dagger, acceded to dictatorship with the excuse of saving the Republic, but actually intended to annihilate it."

Similarly, the right-wing daily *La Nueva Provincia* editorially warned Kirchner: "Remember, you are mortal."

But the Argentine people were not impressed, and they voted unmistakably in support of Kirchner's economic policies—to Wall Street's horror.

In the week since the election, Wall Street and the Cheneys have scrambled to try to control the damage. They have rallied behind the neo-con businessman Mauricio Macri, who won the congressional race for Buenos Aires city with 34% of the vote, putting him forward as the "alternative" to Kirchner for the 2007 presidential race. (LaRouche described Macri as nothing but "a fig leaf that the bankers are using to cover their shame.") And they have demanded that Kirchner *not* interpret the elections as a mandate to continue resisting IMF policies. Now is the time to make a deal with the IMF, the financial press has urged, and to listen to the more "moderate" voice of Economics Minister Roberto Lavagna.

And Brazil?

The fall-out from the Kirchner victory will be felt on various fronts, each of which has strategic implications.

Within Argentina's Peronist party. Kirchner is now the dominant leader of the powerful Justicialist Party, or Peronists, replacing former President Eduardo Duhalde as party strongman. Duhalde, whom LaRouche has described as “the Sancho Panza of the Southern Cone,” opportunistically attacked Kirchner’s economic policies during the campaign, and as a result had the political stuffing knocked out of him by his wife’s senatorial loss to Mrs. Kirchner. President Kirchner will now be able to wield the Peronist political apparatus on behalf of his economic policies.

In neighboring Brazil. The ultra-pragmatist Lula da Silva government has distanced itself from Kirchner’s economic policies, to try to stay in the good graces of the IMF. But Kirchner’s victory will strengthen the hand of those nationalist forces in Brazil—such as those associated with economist Carlos Lessa and Paraná governor Roberto Requião—who want next year’s presidential elections to shift Brazil onto an anti-IMF course more akin to Argentina’s. Where Lula has backed Duhalde against Kirchner, Lessa has supported the Argentine President, delivering a speech on Sept. 18 in which he said: “We have alternatives. The Brazilian state has many more instruments than Argentina, which is facing international pressure with dignity and success, while we are following a policy of retreat, concessions, and submission.” Back in June of this year, Lessa and Requião prepared a television documentary on Argentina, because they were “tired of hearing Kirchner called a defaulter,” and wanted to draw the lessons of Argentina for Brazil.

Brazil is the economic and political heavyweight in South America. If it and Argentina make common cause against the IMF and for a New Bretton Woods, the financial oligarchs will be looking at a strategically significant threat to their grip on the region.

At the Nov. 4-5 Summit of the Americas. This gathering of the heads of state of North and South America, including U.S. President Bush, will take place in Mar del Plata, Argentina. It is already shaping up as a major battle between Washington’s agenda of free trade and globalization, and Argentina’s insistence that a “new financial architecture” must be discussed, under which countries would not be forced to pay their debt at the expense of the population’s social needs. Kirchner’s electoral victory—coming on top of the dramatic weakening of Cheney et al.’s grip on power in the United States and abroad—may help provide some backbone to the other regional presidents, who until now have been terrorized into submission by the IMF and the Cheneyacs’ beast-man tactics.

The ‘Authoritarian Personality’

But perhaps the most fundamental blow dealt the oligarchy by the Argentine elections, is to a feature of their longstanding *philosophical warfare* known as the “Authoritarian Personality.”

That phrase was popularized by the 1950 book *The Au-*

thoritarian Personality, co-authored by the Frankfurt School’s Theodor Adorno. The thesis expounded is a strictly fascist one, centered on the idea that any individual who dares to assert that Truth exists and can be known and communicated to others, is guilty of having an authoritarian personality and dictatorial impulses. Relativism and sophistry are instead promoted, under the banners of “democracy” and “tolerance.”

Besides Adorno, variants of this outlook are associated with the likes of Karl Jaspers, Nazi Party member Martin Heidegger, and Heidegger’s protégé and one-time lover Hannah Arendt. As LaRouche recently quipped, these people are apparently opposed to all “authoritarians”—except for Hitler and Pinochet.

The accusation of “authoritarian personality” is systematically used by the oligarchy and their hit-men to attack those whose views and actions they find threatening. LaRouche is a frequent recipient of the slur; Mexican President José López Portillo likewise, because of his principled battle to defend his country against IMF looting. And the same has happened to Néstor Kirchner over the last couple of years.

The tone of the attack on Kirchner was set by sources such as the *Financial Times* of London, which in October 2004 fumed in its publication *The Banker*, that “Kirchner, the president of Argentina, has reinforced his authoritarian reputation by replacing the country’s central bank president” with someone not to the financiers’ liking. On the campaign trail in September of this year, senatorial candidate Chiche Duhalde denounced Kirchner for displaying “an authoritarian manner of exercising power.” Argentine congresswoman Elisa Carrió of the left-leaning opposition ARI party has been particularly virulent on this point, charging on Sept. 2 that the Kirchner government is “authoritarian,” “ignorant,” and “howling at the Moon.”

This is the same Elisa Carrió who, in May 2004, established the Hannah Arendt Institute of Argentina, to promote the philosophical and political views of Arendt, the soul- (and bed-) mate of the Nazi Heidegger. The Arendt Institute today gives classes on politics and philosophy to Carrió’s followers in various cities in Argentina. At a meeting of the Institute in Neuquén, Argentina in mid July 2005, Carrió showed her philosophical colors by answering a LaRouche Youth Movement member’s insistent question, “Does the truth exist?” by proclaiming: “For me, the truth is a path; beyond that, there are relative truths.”

Also of note is the fact that the academic coordinator of the Hannah Arendt Institute is Diana Maffí, whose doctorate in philosophy and advocacy of human rights and feminist causes have won her financing from such “progressive” agencies as the Ford Foundation and the British Council.

Yet despite the intense campaign to slander Kirchner as “authoritarian” for daring to fight the IMF, the Argentine electorate did not fall for the trap. It seems that beast-man Cheney et al. just don’t command the terrified submission they used to.